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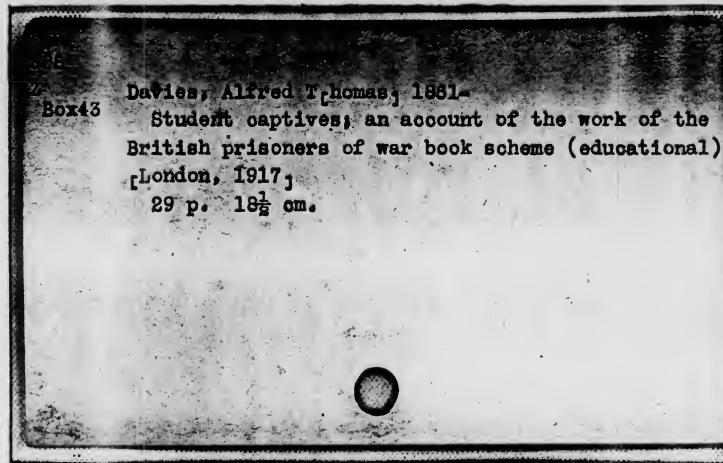
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STUDENT CAPTIVES

AN ACCOUNT OF THE
WORK OF THE BRITISH
PRISONERS OF WAR BOOK
SCHEME (EDUCATIONAL)
BY ALFRED T. DAVIES

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STUDENT CAPTIVES

AN ACCOUNT OF THE WORK
OF THE BRITISH PRISONERS
OF WAR BOOK SCHEME
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ALFRED T. DAVIES



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PREFACE

The account of the work of the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational), contained in the article entitled "The British Prisoner of War and His Books," was contributed by the Chairman to the April number of *Khaki*, and is reprinted for general circulation by kind permission of the Editor of that magazine.

The work of supplying the mental needs of the prisoners has had an interesting sequel in the "Message of Encouragement and Hope" (see page 22), which has recently been despatched to the Internment Camps in enemy and neutral countries as the result of a Conference initiated, at the request of the War Office, by the Committee of the Book Scheme, and held on March 15th, 1917, at the offices of the Board of Education.

The Committee of this War Charity—the only one of its kind—take this opportunity of expressing their warm thanks to all who have helped them in the carrying on of their work which it is intended shall be continued till all need for

Captivorum animis dent libri libertatem.

it has ceased. Their thanks in this connection are especially due to the United States Embassies in this country and in various foreign capitals, and particularly to Mr. Gerard and his staff at Berlin, who have at all times responded willingly to every call made upon them to assist in alleviating the lot of British Prisoners of War.

The safeguarding of the mental interests of the prisoners and the making of suitable provision for their education and other necessities, so as to enable them as speedily as possible after they are released to redeem the time of their captivity, is work in the prosecution of which the Committee confidently rely on the continued support of those who have made possible their past efforts in those directions.

April, 1917.

THE BRITISH PRISONER OF WAR AND HIS BOOKS.

A CHRISTMAS CARD recently designed for the British prisoners interned at Ruhleben represents a couple of men watching eagerly for the dawn of 1917 from behind a wire fence of close mesh which forms the barrier between them and the outside world from which they have been so long excluded. The tense look on their faces and the whole attitude of these two civilian victims of the present desperate struggle reveal to us something of the condition—mental and physical—in which some 4,000 of our fellow countrymen found themselves in the summer of 1914, when they were caught by the tide of war and flung as captives into a makeshift compound formed on the race-course at Ruhleben, on the outskirts of Berlin. The trials of confinement and of enforced idleness led three of them, some months later, to send “at a venture” identical letters to friends in this country (one of whom was myself). In this communication they pleaded for books—serious books for purposes of study. Accordingly, with the

approval of the President of the Board of Education, I set about organising a system of book supply.

The appeal for books for the men who on the eventful August 4, 1914, being on the wrong side of the frontiers of Germany, were speedily rounded up and interned met, as might be expected, with a liberal response. But it had to be as varied and comprehensive in character as those whose needs it was intended to supply. These included in their ranks all sorts and conditions of men, from a University professor to a jockey. In the course of a few months over 8,000 volumes (since increased by several thousands more) were got together and despatched to this Camp, the principal one at which civilians are interned. There they have formed the nucleus of "the good Library dealing with a wide variety of subjects" (to quote the terms of the Camp Syllabus) which has enabled a comprehensive system of education to be planned and carried out among the interned—a system which well entitles the Camp Education Department and the Science and Art Union to the name of "University of Ruhleben" which has

recently been claimed for them. It will perhaps be a matter of surprise to many to learn that, for over a year and a half, some 200 lecturers and teachers and 1,500 students, organised in nine different departments of study (the arts, languages, sciences, navigation, engineering, music, etc.), have been busily at work in the Camp, and that there is perhaps as much solid work going on among these civilian victims of the Great War as can be claimed to-day by any University in the British Empire.

So successful were the efforts made to meet the needs of the Ruhleben men, and so responsive was the British public to our appeals, that a great extension of the work was undertaken in the autumn of 1915. It was realised at home that "not by bread alone" could the thousands of prisoners be enabled to survive with unimpaired faculties, the rigours of long-continued confinement. From the many hundreds of internment camps in Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey (in Europe and Asia), Holland, Scandinavia and Switzerland has come a continuous demand for books, and yet more books, until the work of collection and distribu-

tion—started on modest lines—has now reached a scale which involves the regular ingathering and despatching of many thousands of works, representative of all that is best in current literature in the realms of science, art, letters and industry.

To describe in detail the character and variety of the requests which are now reaching us to supply the needs of men anxious to utilise their enforced leisure to the best advantage, would necessitate a sketch of the composite character of the British Navy and Army of to-day. These comprise in their ranks men of very varied types who, in turn, reveal the amazing varieties (as well, I am sorry to say, as the defects), of pre-war education in this country and in our colonies. The scheme is organised on the principle of providing every prisoner with exactly the book or books on any subject and in any language he may desire or need, and "no dumping allowed" is a rule which is applied alike to donors and recipients. As a result, we aim at supplying not merely the needs of Private Smith, who at home is a labourer or mechanic, but of Captain Brown, who may have been

a civilian before the war, and may be a University graduate, a barrister (actual or potential), an engineer, a doctor, an accountant, or a student of metaphysics, and who wants the latest and best books on his particular subject or subjects. One man asks for a book on Tropical Agriculture, another wants a manual on Cotton Spinning, whilst a third's need is Schlumberger's *Siege de Constantinople*. A R.N.D. man writes: "Please send me a parcel of educational books, suitable for studying during my internment, to enable me on my return to sit for the First Class Civil Service Exam." Another writes for—and receives through the generosity of the publisher—a beautiful work on the *Sculptured Tombs of Rome* on the study of which he is himself engaged with a view to making a personal contribution to it on his release. "The Agricultural Holdings Act, a Motor Manual, Practical Navigation, Bee-keeping and Furniture (periods and styles)" form the burden of a fairly comprehensive request from some R.N.V.R. men at Doeberitz.

In the matter of the choice of books, the "student-captives" and their friends are frequently quite definite in their

wants ; but sometimes the choice is left to us, and we do our best, seemingly, in most cases, with satisfactory results.

The men themselves supplement our efforts by not monopolising the contents of the parcels sent out to them. They are also quick to pass on the good news which, with the kind and active assistance of the United States Ambassadors at Berlin and the other foreign capitals, we have been enabled to spread abroad among the many hundreds of internment Camps—there are over six hundred in Germany alone. Very touching is this disposition on the part of prisoners to help one another. Just as the interned at Ruhleben formed their own "Education Department" so do a few captives here and there collaborate for a like purpose, and seek to profit by their daily association with men of other nationalities—particularly French, Russian and Italian fellow-prisoners, whose language many of them are busily engaged in learning. Here are a couple of examples from my big daily post-bag : "We are working in stone-quarries with some Frenchmen," writes a Private, "and should like to be able to talk to them

more." "I can speak Russian pretty fair, but not [grammarians please note] in their grammar," writes a Jack Tar.

The sad note is touched by a certified teacher who writes [alas, how many are in like case, but are inarticulate?] : "No one knows better than I myself how I am deteriorating," but nevertheless he asks for—and gets—books on Educational Psychology, so that he may keep abreast of modern developments in his profession.

But the work does not end with the sending of books. We have made arrangements under which various educational bodies agree—under proper conditions—to give credit to "external students," on their return, for the work they had done in captivity. In some cases, too, examinations have actually been held in the internment camp, and a recent Report of the Royal Society of Arts says : "At Ruhleben the conditions were very difficult, but the difficulties were overcome by the kind help of the Agency at the Board of Education, which was able to get the packets of examination papers through without their being opened by the Censor. . . . There were forty-one

papers, and only a single failure. The subjects were Book-keeping, Shorthand, English, French, German and Spanish. Some of the work done was extremely good, and all was satisfactory." Similarly at Groningen in Holland, nineteen of the men interned there passed, not long ago, a "brilliant examination" conducted by the Board of Trade (Marine Department). This will mean that these nineteen British Seamen will emerge from captivity with higher qualifications and higher rank as officers in the British Mercantile Marine than they held when they fell into the hands of our enemies. Other men, encouraged by this result, are busily engaged in preparing to do likewise.

And how, some one will ask, are all these multifarious needs, which would severely tax the resources of the largest of public libraries, met and satisfied? First and foremost, by the self-denying efforts of a staff composed almost entirely of ladies who have given themselves up to the work of the book-room. Day after day, month after month, thousands, nay tens of thousands, of volumes pass through the hands of this volunteer staff

at Whitehall. Each book on our shelves represents no inconsiderable amount of labour in the way of acceptance, unpacking, checking, acknowledging, censoring, sorting, classifying, indexing, labelling (for in each book is inserted a plate bearing the name and address of its donor), and finally, selection as the most suitable to send out to a particular prisoner who may, or may not, have been very specific in the expression of his needs.

Added to all this work is the further one of satisfying the military censor, who, on this side of the Channel, is very strict, and on the other side is not always consistent. Newspapers (even as wrappers), "war-books," and recent works on certain subjects (e.g. aviation and the tides) are of course "taboo"; so also—according to some German censors—are atlases which, seemingly, are a sore point just now with our enemies. A consignment of Russian books, and another of Welsh ones, has been known not to get through because, forsooth, "there was no German in them."

Next comes the generosity of those who respond to the constant invitations

which are addressed to them to deplete their own book-shelves in order that their treasured (or discarded) volumes may minister to the wants of their more needy brethren. Learned societies and schools, publishers and authors, employers and parents, and many other admirers of British officers and men, have vied with each other in submitting to us the "Lists of Books offered" which are a condition precedent to our acceptance of gifts for the interned. But most touching of all, made doubly precious by the sources from whence they come, are the gifts from parents whose sons have been killed in the war, and who feel prompted to put a crown upon the sacrifice they have already made. "*My only son fell leading his men at Loos,*" wrote a widow (an example of many): "*I send you his school and college prizes: please use them for the splendid work you are doing for his comrades. It is my wish, and I am sure it would have been his, that they should be so used.*" It is needless to say how much we respect the mother who can deny herself the joy of keeping these precious relics.

As to the value of the work, it is per-

haps hardly for me to speak. But can those of us at home, to whom books are as the breath of life, imagine what it must be to have days and months of time in enforced inactivity and never a line to read? Can we picture to ourselves the state of the energetic young man, working hard to rise in his calling, leaving the books and classes, on which depended all his hopes, in order to join the colours, and now condemned to eat his heart out, day after day, in enforced inactivity in some far-distant Camp, surrounded only by the enemies of his country? In such circumstances what a priceless boon books must be! Well might one prisoner write: "*Books are more to me than food.*" The prisoners are for all practical purposes like shipwrecked mariners, often, it is feared, short of food for the body and, certainly, always craving for food for the mind. But, cut off as they are from the outside world, these fellow-countrymen of ours can still be reached if we stretch out our hands to help them. Send them food certainly, all that they need, but let us not forget that starvation of the mind may have for them results as grievous as starvation of the body.

Great books have before now been written in captivity and exile: we think in this connection of St. Paul and his letters to the first Christian Churches; of Bedford Gaol and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; of Camoens and *The Lusiads*; of Sir Walter Raleigh in the Tower, writing his *History of the World*; of Silvio Pellico and *My Prisons*.

When the War is past and our hearts have ceased to throb with the stress of battle, who knows but that, from the pen of one of these captives, may come something that will live as long as the memory of the cataclysm that produced it? Let us, at all events, give these men their chance of continuing their education. It is with that object that some of us set our hands to this work; and it is in the same spirit that others (with a generosity we are glad to have this opportunity of acknowledging) have enabled us to carry it on.

A. T. D.

NOTE.—The notice on the opposite page has been widely circulated in the Internment Camps. 300 copies were placed in the hands of Mr. Gerard for delivery (with the permission of the German Government, which was duly obtained) by members of his staff when visiting the Camps. Several thousands of copies have also been circulated among the Prisoners by post or enclosed (with the British Censors' permission) in food parcels.

TO BRITISH PRISONERS of WAR. BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!

On application—either direct or through a friend—at the address given below, almost any book (except magazines, novels, and other light literature) on any subject, will be supplied *gratis* to any British Prisoner of War for the purpose of serious study.

Seize this opportunity to cultivate your mind, improve your knowledge, and, at the same time, alleviate the tedium of your captivity.

State as nearly as you can the kind of books you want (subject, grade, etc.), and every effort will be made to procure and forward them to you.

The British Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational), will also gladly supply, on application, a Form of Record on which your studies (whether private or class) can be recorded. Get this Form if you are studying: your reading during internment, and this record of it, may help you on your return as Examining Bodies and Employers will be prepared to recognize in a liberal spirit any work done or examinations passed by you whilst in captivity.

Letter from the Rt. Hon. The Marquess of Crewe, K.G., then President of the Board of Education.

Board of Education,
Whitehall, London, S.W.,
20th September, 1916.

Dear Mr. Davies,

I understand that the newly formed Committee for the supply of Educational Books to Prisoners of War will shortly hold its first meeting, and I am unwilling that the occasion should pass without a word to convey the good wishes of the Board. As you are aware, the object is not one which we can promote officially, beyond giving some help in the matter of accommodation: but the success which has attended your extensive though less formal efforts so far is a clear proof of the invaluable service which can be rendered to our unhappy fellow-countrymen by giving them the opportunity of developing serious interests in different directions during the hard and dreary months of their detention. I know that your work will become more and more fruitful.

I am, yours sincerely,
CREWE.

Letter from The Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, M.P., President of the Board of Education, to the Conference referred to in the Preface, at which the appended "Message of Encouragement and Hope" to the Prisoners was decided upon.

15th March, 1917.

I am gratified to learn that so many Bodies concerned, in one way or another, with Education, have come together to consider how best they can meet, in a liberal and sympathetic spirit, the special needs of those students who have the misfortune to be interned in an enemy or neutral country. I have no doubt that the action of the Conference will prove a great encouragement to the men to use wisely and well the time of their captivity and, further, will be of material assistance to them on their return to this country. For these reasons I am in the fullest sympathy with the objects of the Conference, and will watch its outcome with the greatest interest.

H. A. L. FISHER.

TO PRISONERS OF WAR !
"A MESSAGE OF ENCOURAGE-
MENT AND HOPE."

The British Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational), which for nearly two years has been engaged in forwarding to British Prisoners of War interned in enemy or neutral countries gifts of books on any subject which they may require for the purposes of serious study, is now able to make a gratifying announcement which it is hoped will encourage every Prisoner to make the best use of the remaining period of his internment.

The following Departments and Examining Bodies, realizing that many Prisoners have made great efforts to pursue systematic courses of study, and that arrangements are in existence for recording the work done by them, and, in some cases, for examining them—are prepared to recognise in a liberal spirit any work done or examinations passed by such prisoners while in captivity, and also, in cases where such prisoners on their return home may apply for examination, to arrange, so far as

is practicable and consistent with educational effectiveness, to examine them without delay and in a manner suited to their circumstances :

Board of Education
Board of Trade (Marine Department)
Home Office
War Office (Army Schools Department)
Civil Service Commission (in respect of non-competitive examinations)
Imperial College of Science and Technology
Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate
City and Guilds of London Institute (Department of Technology)
Law Society
Conjoint Examining Board in England by the Royal College of Physicians of London and the Royal College of Surgeons of England
Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons
Royal Society of Arts
London Chamber of Commerce
College of Preceptors
National Union of Teachers
United Russia Societies Association
St. John Ambulance Association
British Red Cross Society

Royal Institute of British Architects
Society of Architects
Royal Drawing Society
Board of Examinations for Educational
Handwork.
Royal Horticultural Society
Royal College of Music
Trinity College of Music
Royal College of Organists
Tonic Sol-fa College
The Institute of Chartered Accountants
Society of Incorporated Accountants and
Auditors
Institute of Actuaries
Auctioneers and Estate Agents Institute
Institute of Bankers
Institute of Chemistry of Great Britain
and Ireland
Concrete Institute
Institution of Civil Engineers
Institution of Mechanical Engineers
Institute of Municipal Engineers
Society of Engineers
Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
Royal Institute of Public Health
Royal Sanitary Institute
Chartered Institute of Secretaries
Surveyors Institution

The following UNIVERSITIES, &c.,
in the United Kingdom and Ireland
have also intimated their intention of
adopting a similar course as regards
their own students, and in many cases
have already done so :

Oxford	Cambridge
London	Durham
Birmingham	Bristol
Leeds	Liverpool
Manchester	Sheffield

Wales

Aberdeen	Edinburgh
Glasgow	St. Andrews

Dublin and Trinity College
National University of Ireland
Queen's University of Belfast
and also

The Inns of Court and Council
of Legal Education

Any Prisoner who is now studying, or proposing to study during captivity, with a view to presenting himself for examination held by any of these Examining or Professional Bodies, and any Prisoner who already is, or proposes to become, a member of one of these Universities is recommended to communicate his intentions without delay to Mr. A. T. Davies, who will then notify the same to the University or to the Examining or Professional Body with whom he hopes to have relation. By this means the interned student will at once be brought into direct communication with such Body.

POSTSCRIPT.—Since the account given in the foregoing pages was written, word has been received that seven of the men interned at Ruhleben have passed the London University Matriculation Examination. Arrangements have also been made, through the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational), for the holding, at the same camp, of Examinations of the University of Edinburgh, the Royal College of Arts, and of the London Chamber of Commerce.

THE FUTURE—ITS NEEDS AND A POLICY.

It is hoped that a perusal of this little book will lead to the conclusion that, in the interests of the nation, the work described in it should not be curtailed, even though the prospect of peace draws nearer, but rather that it should be continued in full force as a necessary part of that work of re-construction which will need to be the nation's chief concern at the close of the war. During their internment the studies of thousands of young men in the prime of life will have been rudely interrupted, in some cases—despite the efforts put forth on their behalf—entirely suspended, for one, two, or even three years. Many of the youths who will have lost, or partially lost, these precious years will find it very difficult to make up lost time, and, as a result, their education will seriously and permanently suffer unless steps be taken to extend a helping hand to them.

The Committee of the British Prisoners of War Book Scheme (Educational) have under their consideration a scheme, to be brought into operation on the liberation of the captives, whereby prisoners

in poor circumstances, and especially those living in rural districts and other remote parts of the British Isles, will be able to obtain the loan, for purposes of study, of books which they cannot afford to buy and which they have no opportunity of borrowing from a public library. A large lending library of some thousands of volumes, especially intended for released British prisoners and other victims of the war, and to be affiliated to and worked from some existing central library, will, therefore, it is hoped, be one eventual outcome of the Committee's present efforts. Another intention—which can only be carried out if funds permit—is to form a Loan Fund out of which temporary advances can be made to deserving students (returned prisoners) to enable them to pay examination and tuition fees as well as other expenses which they will necessarily have to incur in order to tide over what will be to many of them a time of great stress and strain. Meantime, the war is not yet over, the internment camps are still filling, and the incessant call of the prisoners for books—and yet more books—still falls on our ears and must be answered.

BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR BOOK SCHEME (EDUCATIONAL)

[Registered under the War Charities Act, 1916.]

COMMITTEE

ALFRED T. DAVIES, C.B. (Board of Education), Chairman and Hon. Director

P. D. AGNEW (Managing Director, Central Prisoners of War Committee)

GEORGE E. BAKER (Board of Trade)

REAR-ADmirAL J. F. PARRY, C.B.
(Admiralty)

THE COUNTESS OF BECTIVE

MAJOR DAVID DAVIES, LL.D., M.P.

C. T. HAGBERG WRIGHT, LL.D. (London Library)

HON. TREASURER

REAR-ADmirAL J. F. PARRY, C.B.

HON. AUDITORS

MESSRS. CHARLES COMINS & CO.,
Chartered Accountants, 50 Cannon Street,
E.C.4

BANKERS

LONDON CITY & MIDLAND BANK,
Charing Cross Branch

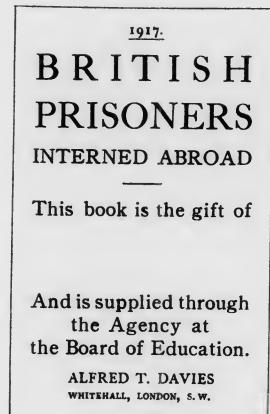
OFFICE

BOARD OF EDUCATION, Whitehall,
London, S.W.1

* * All communications should be addressed: "A. T. DAVIES,
Esq., C.B., Board of Education, Whitehall, London,
S.W.1.," and the words "Prisoners of War" should
be written in the left-hand top corner.

BOOK-PLATE

Inserted in the Books before they are
forwarded to the camps.



Additional copies of this booklet, for the
purpose of general circulation, may
be obtained upon application
at the price of Sixpence
per copy.



MSH 20931



**END OF
TITLE**